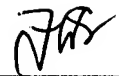


## EAST Search History



Ref #	Hits	Search Query	DBs	Default Operator	Plurals	Time Stamp
L3	365	68/148.CCLS.	US-PGPU B; USPAT; USOCR; EPO; JPO; DERWEN T; IBM_TDB	OR	ON	2007/04/10 10:26

the same material.

Fig. 2 and Figs. 2a, 2b and 2c depict embodiments in which the retaining element is structured as a slotted receptacle 26 and is connected to the extension. In this case, too, the previously mentioned ways of adjusting the gap and permanent mounting on the bracket may be freely varied. In some examples (Fig. 2, 2a, 2b), the extension 15 consists of a plastic core 27 with an elastomeric coating 28. Fig. 2c depicts a one-piece extension 15 made of an elastomeric material, e.g. EPDM. All variants are provided with an integral deflector lip 29 for preventing small articles (coins, nails, etc.) inadvertently left in the pockets of laundry from moving into the area between the drum and the sudsing container where they may damage the output section of the sudsing container.

In the embodiments of Fig. 1, 1a, 1b as well as in the embodiments of Figs. 2c it was shown to be useful, to use a material for the elastomeric component 20 or the coating 27 of the extension 15 which is of greater hardness than the folding bellows 7. This ensures greater structural stability and abrasion resistance and, in turn, a constant gap dimension s over the entire life of the washing machine. In these embodiments, a covering ring of chromium steel may be placed on the upper end 16 of the extension 15 (not shown).

In the variant shown in Fig. 3, the elastomeric component of the extension is molded onto the folding bellows. This component is provided with a receiving slot 30 in which an angled support ring 17 (see Fig. 1) is supported. It is thus possible after aligning the extension 15 to attach the extension 15 and the folding bellows with but one clamping ring 10. This requires accepting the disadvantage of the extension 15 also consisting of the material of lower hardness which must be used for manufacturing the folding bellows 7.